

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1451

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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BRUSSELS PASS FAA; CASABLANCA FOR RCAA OFFICE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BRIO, EAIR, GH

SUBJ: CIVAIR: GHANA AIRWAYS, PLANS, PROSPECTS, AND EQUIPMENT

REF: ABIDJAN MEMCON, DATED JANUARY 28, 1976 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: GHANA AIRWAYS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEW FIRM, AFRIKA CONTINENTAL AIRWAYS, PROVIDING DC-8, AND VERY SHORTLY DC-9, SERVICE IN LIEU OF F-28 ON AFRICA WEST COAST RUN. GHANA AIRWAYS AND AFRIKA CONTINENTAL HAVE LARGE AMBITIONS FOR EXPANDING SERVICE. INTERNAL COORDINATION AND ENTIRE QUESTION OF FINANCING REMAINS TO BE RESOLVED, HOWEVER, END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MARCH 2 MEETING WITH COLONEL J.O. KORANTENG, MANAGING DIRECTOR, GHANA AIRWAYS (GH), RCAA, E/C COUNSELOR AND ANOTHER EMBOFF RECEIVED CONFIRMATION THAT FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS GH HAD BEEN OPERATING

DC8-33 ON AFRICA WEST COAST RUN, REPLACING UNECONOMICAL F-28'S. DC-8'S FURNISHED BY AFRIKA CONTINENTAL AIRWAYS (ACA), REPORTEDLY UNDER PROFIT-SHARING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN GH(40PCT) AND ACA (YP PCT).

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3. KORANTENG STATED HE VERY PLEASED THIS OPERATION DUE INCREASED CAPACITY ON THIS LUCRATIVE ROUTE, BETTER ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND HIGH LOAD FACTORS. HE INDICATED HE HAD RUNG THE DC-8 IN ON UN-SUSPECTING CRITICS AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI, AND HAD PROVED HIS POINT. HE NOTED PREVIOUS AND CURRENT "POLITICAL" PRESSURE IN FAVOR F-28'S; IN ORDER TO THWART THIS PRESSURE HE HAS WETLEASED DC-9-30 (DUE ACCRA NEXT FEW DAYS) FOR WEST COAST ROUTE AND WILL, THEREFORE, BE ABLE PRESENT HIS "OPPONENTS" WITH ADDITIONAL FACT ACCOMPI (VASTLY INCREASED SERVICE EFFICIENCY, CAPACITY AND REVENUE-EARNER; ALREADY DEMONSTRATED WITH DC-8 OPERATION).

4. LATER SAME DAY SAME OFFICERS MET WITH RECENTLY-APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF BOARD, GH, JOHN A. LARTEY, WHO IS ALSO DEPTY MANAGING DIRECTOR, GHANA COMMERCIAL BANK. LARTY THROUGHOUT MEETING EM-PHASIZED HE WANTED PURCHASE NEW U.S. EQUIPMENT, TO BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN HIS BANK AND CHEMICAL BAN, NEW YORK, WITH NO REPEAT NO DEALINGS WITH INTERMEDIARIES. LARTEY FAILED TO MENTION UTILIZA-TION DC-8'S OR WETLEASE OF DC-9-30, AND MAY BE UNINFORMED OF LATTER. LARTEY CLAIMED APPROVAL UP TO AND INCLUDING HEAD OF STATE FOR REPLACE-MENT OF F-28'S WITH DC9'S OR BOEING 737'S.

5. AGAIN SAME DAY RCAA AND E/C COUNSELOR MET WITH DR. CARLYLE LANGFORD, PRESIDENT AND LLOYD SHACKLEFORD, MANAGING DIRECOTR, BOTH OF ACA: AND F.D. PARSON, CUSTOMS SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE, DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT CO. LANGFORD IS TRINIDADIAN, SCHACKLEFORD GHANAIN, AND PARSONS AMERICAN. IN BRIEF, LANGFORD STATED HIS COMPANY HAD RECENTLY PURCHASED FOUR USED DC-8-33'S SUPPLIED BY "RANGER AIR" THROUGH BROKERS IN CHARLESTON, S.C., TWO PASSENGER AND ONE CARGO VERSIONS WERE OPERATING OUT OF GHANA WITH GH MARKINGS AND ONE WAS STILL IN U.S. PARSONS NOTED THAT ALL FOUR AIRCRAFT WERE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION AND LOW TIME DUE FACT IMMEDIATELY PRIOR PURCHASE THEY WERE MAINTAINED BY DELTA AIRLINES. AIRCRAFT BEGAN OPERATIONS OUT OF ACCRA APPROXIMATELY TWO MONTHS AGO ON CHARTERS TO MECCA. LATER, THROUGH PROFIT-SHARING ARRANGEMENT WITH GH, DC-8'S REPLACED UNENOCONOMICAL AND INADEQUATE (CAPACITY) F-28'S ON WEST AFRICAN COASTAL ROUTE. PARSONS NOTED DC-8 LOAD FACTORS WERE EX-CELLENT AND OPERATION VASTLY IMPROVED THROUGHOUT. LANGFORD SAID HIS COMPANY WETLEASING DC-9-30 FROM HUGHES AIR WEST (AIRCRAFT DUE ACCRA NEXT FEW DAYS) FOR APPROXIMATELY EIGHT DAYS FOR USE WEST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFRICAN COAST ROUTE (WITH DC-8 AS VACKUP). AT SAME TIME HIS COMPANY HAS PURCHASED DC-9-50 (MOST MODERN MEDIUM-RANGE JET TRANSPORT IN OPERATION WORLDWIDE) WITH DELIVERY SCHEDULE APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY DAYS, AT WHICH TIME IT WILL REPLACE DC-9-30 ON REGIONAL ROUTE. DC-8'S WOULD REPLACE AGED GH VC-10 ON LUCRATIVE EUROPEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN ROUTES, PROJECTED ACCRA-NAIROBI SERVICE AND POSSIBLY EVEN TRANS-ATLANTIC. IN NEXT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS HE PLANS PURCHASE DC-10 FOR LONG HAULS.

6. COMMENT: AL OF FOREGOING IS A BIT HEADY FOR THE DEFICIT-RIDDEN AND CHRONICALLY MISMANAGED GH. INTEREST IN DC-10 IN NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE ALSO MANIFESTED BY DCA AND KORANTENG. QUESTION OF FINANCING AIRCRAFT LEFT VERY MUCH UP IN AIR. CHEMICAL BANK OFFICER TODL E/C COUNSELOR MARCH 4 HIS BANK MAKING NO PROMISE EXCEPT TO LISTEN, AND IS DISCOURAGING EVEN CONSIDERING ANYTHING AS BIG AS DC-10.

7. LITTLE IS KNOWN OF ACA, EXCEPT THAT MANAGING DIRECTOR LANGFORD REPUTED TO BE A MILLIONAIRE TRINIDADIAN; ONLY OTHER TWO DIRECTORS ARE GHANAIANS, WHO MAY BE THERE SIMPLY TO ROUND OFF BOARD. COMPANY REGISTERED IN GHANA JAN. 9, 1976. IT SEEMS TO HAVE SPROUTED FULL-GROWN FROM HEAD OF ZEUS. CLAIMS TO HAVE SOME 30 EMPLOYEES HERE. IT IS INTERESTING THAT APPARENTLY IT HAS FOUND SOME WAY TO REMIT PROCEEDS EVEN IN THIS DIFFICULT INVESTMENT CLIMATE WITH ITS SEVERE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESTRAINTS.

8. FOR PORT OF SPAIN: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON DR. LANGFORD, ESPECIALLY ANY CONNECTION HE MAY HAVE HAD PREVIOUSLY WITH AVIATION.

9. FOREGOING CONTAINS CONSIDERABLE PROPRIETARY INFORMATION; PLEASE PROTECT CAREFULLY.
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